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CHAPTER III

WELFARE WORK OF THE CHIU TA SALT REFINERY

I. THE LIVING QUARTER OF THE WORKERS

362 466 When the Chiu Ta Factory was first established, a few houses were reserved for workers to live in, free of charge. As the number of workers increased, a regular dormitory was built in 1924, in which 40 rooms were available for their use. The arrangement in all the rooms is more or less similar. Each room accommodates 12 persons and is furnished with chiffonier a board table, chairs and even tea sets. The men are free to choose their own room mates, so that acquaintances and friends may feel at home in living together and the management of the dormitory was thereby greatly facilitated.

The dormitory is managed on a self-governing plan by the workers, though the factory authorities reserve to themselves the right to supervise its management. Regulations governing the dormitory were, of course, drawn up by the factory.

The dormitory rooms are inspected by the authorities once in the morning for cleanliness and once in the evening in order to see whether all have turned in and are well-behaving. For the management of the dormitory, there are elected among the workers in each room two men whose duties are to supervise the conduct of their room mates, enforce the rules regarding discipline and cleanliness and report things of consequence to the managerial department. Each one in the room is, in turn, responsible for one day to clean it.

362 356 466 Cleanliness is classified by the factory authorities into five grades and after the daily inspection, each room is marked with a certain grade. At the end of every month, reward both in money and in kind are given to members of those rooms which have received high grading, while fines are imposed on those

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who fail to observe the rules of order and cleanliness. The rewards vary from one to five dollars, while the fines, only from 5 to 30 cents. The fines are not collected by the factory but are reserved for buying, at a later date, things that are needed in the rooms on which fines have been imposed. This system of rewards and fines is said to have worked quite satisfactorily. And our investigation well supports this view, for during the stay of the investigator in the factory, always he found the rooms well kept.

Workers having families are not provided with free lodging by the factory. As workmen who brought families to Tangku have greatly increased in recent years, the factory bought in 1926 35 rooms which have been let out to them on very reasonable terms. Again, in the summer of 1927, a group of new houses of about 33 rooms was built by the factory for the accommodation of workers' families. Some more new houses, it is said, will be put up with a view to forming in the future a Chiu Ta Community in Tangku. The factory charges only 50 to 80 cents per room as monthly rent which is barely enough for its annual repairing. Such expenses as building a doorway or walls are borne by the factory.

Water Supply.—There has never been any fresh water-supply at Tangku. Fresh water is brought over from a long distance and at a high price. It was the Chiu Ta Factory that first opened two artesian wells and furnished cold and boiled water to its resident workers. In 1927, when the price of fresh water soared up, the use of the well water was also granted to the workers who had families with them. The quantity of water each family may consume is limited according to its size.

Fuel and Light.—The resident workers are provided with electric light and heating, free of charge. Workers having families are denied this benefit, but wood shavings in the factory are distributed to them free. Again, in the east section coal dust is sold to the workers having families at 25 cents per 100 catties, while in the west section it is simply thrown away, so that those who want it may pick the same up.